

## Parent Section

### Introduction

Although there are several items in the Toolkit that would be useful for family members, the items in this section of the toolkit are specifically intended to assist families in thinking about and organizing plans for the future of a young adult with special needs. Some of the information is very general in nature and has application for all young adults such as “*Questions that should be answered before graduation*”. Some of the other tools were designed to assist in planning for individuals with more significant support needs. Most of these items were developed for use in varied projects and are not meant as an exhaustive curriculum for family members regarding transition. These are suggested materials to supplement those currently used in your school district.

**Users of the Toolkit are encouraged to review the materials and select those most appropriate for the family and young adult under consideration.**

The following is a list of the items in the PARENT SECTION of the Toolkit:

- Questions That Should Be Answered Before Graduation
- Parent Interview - Portfolio Inventory Form
- Before: Parent/Family Transition Assessment form
- Tips for Parents... helping your children plan their careers
- Preparing your son or daughter for adulthood
- Transition Checklist

Fast Facts: Transition related:

- Transition Planning: What – Why – How
- Transition Requirements: Beginning at age 14
- Transition Requirements: Beginning at age 16
- Transition: Important Ages and Milestones
- Adult and Community Agencies
- How Do I Obtain Mental Health Support for My Child?
- School to Work Alliance Program – SWAP

# QUESTIONS THAT SHOULD BE ANSWERED BEFORE GRADUATION

1. WHERE IS THE STUDENT GOING VOCATIONALLY? FURTHER TRAINING OR EDUCATION? A SPECIFIC JOB?
2. WHERE WILL THE STUDENT LIVE AND WHAT KIND OF SUPPORTS, IF ANY, WILL BE NEEDED?
3. WHAT WILL BE THE MAJOR FORM OF TRANSPORTATION THE STUDENT WILL USE?
4. HOW WILL THE STUDENT MAINTAIN AND INCREASE HIS/HER SOCIAL LIFE?
5. WHAT LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES WILL THE STUDENT BE INVOLVED IN?
6. HOW WILL THE STUDENT MEET HIS/HER MEDICAL NEEDS?
7. WHAT AGENCIES WILL HELP? HOW WILL THEY BE CONTACTED AND BY WHOM?



McAlonan, 1989

## Parent Interview – Transition Portfolio Inventory

As your son or daughter moves closer to graduation, it is important to begin to plan for his or her future. Parents are an important source of information about students that will help educators develop the most appropriate plans and services as youth are preparing for adult life. As we are developing plans with your son or daughter, your input and involvement is critical. Please take a few minutes to consider your son or daughter and identify the things that he or she is currently capable of doing and any areas that may need some attention. This inventory consists of categories related to independent living. Please address those categories you think are appropriate and meet the current areas of need for your child.

School/BOCES: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Dad's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Wk#: \_\_\_\_\_ Hm# \_\_\_\_\_

Mom's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Wk#: \_\_\_\_\_ Hm# \_\_\_\_\_

### Education / Career

How does your child learn best?

watching others;  listening to others;  working with his/her hands;

What are your child's best subjects? \_\_\_\_\_

What are the classes that give your child the most trouble? \_\_\_\_\_

What kind of vocational training/education would you like your child to have after high school and what would s/he like to study?

What school/training does s/he plan to attend? \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Institution / Organization

College/University – Course of study: \_\_\_\_\_  Vocational training – Program: \_\_\_\_\_  
 On-the job training – specialization: \_\_\_\_\_  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

What source(s) of funding can help pay for your child's education?

FAFSA  Agency  Parents  Your Bank Account

## Community / Independent Living

### ◆ EATING AND FOOD PREPARATION

|  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| <b>Preparing meals and snacks:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gathers ingredients and equipment</li> <li>▪ Opens containers</li> <li>▪ Follows recipe</li> <li>▪ Uses microwave</li> <li>▪ Uses stove top</li> <li>▪ Uses oven</li> <li>▪ Uses other appliances</li> </ul> | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Eating meal /snack</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Oral motor skills i.e. chewing/swallowing</li> <li>▪ Uses utensils</li> <li>▪ Uses manners</li> </ul>   | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Preparing eating area</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sets table</li> <li>▪ Gets condiments</li> </ul>   | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Cleaning up after meal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Puts away leftovers</li> <li>▪ Wipes off work surface</li> <li>▪ Washes dishes –               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hand washing</li> <li>○ Using Dishwasher</li> </ul> </li> </ul>           | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Accessibility to kitchen</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uses adaptive equipment</li> </ul>  | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Priorities:</b>   |                              |

### ◆ GROOMING AND DRESSING

|   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| <b>Grooming:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Brushes teeth</li> <li>▪ Uses mouthwash</li> <li>▪ Brushes/combs hair</li> <li>▪ Styles hair</li> <li>▪ Skin care</li> <li>▪ Uses make-up</li> <li>▪ Cleans eyeglasses</li> <li>▪ Cleans hearing aid ear molds</li> <li>▪ Maintains appearance</li> </ul> | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Dressing/Undressing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dresses and Undresses self</li> <li>▪ Chooses appropriate clothes</li> <li>▪ Dresses appropriately for season/weather conditions</li> </ul>   | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Priorities:</b>  |                              |

◆ **HYGIENE AND TOILETING**

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Using private &amp; public toilets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ toileting needs</li> <li>▪ washes hands</li> <li>▪ Bath / showering</li> <li>▪ Shampooing / rinsing hair</li> <li>▪ Managing menstrual care</li> </ul> <p><b>Shaving</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Men</li> <li>▪ Women</li> <li>▪ Using deodorant</li> </ul> | <p>Current Level of Functioning</p> |
| <p><b>Priorities:</b></p>  |                                     |

◆ **SEXUALITY, HEALTH, SAFETY**

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| <p><b>Awareness of sexuality issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Awareness of public vs. private activities</li> <li>▪ Closes door for bathing, toileting, dressing, etc.</li> <li>▪ Appropriate show of affection</li> <li>▪ Appropriate control of sexual needs</li> <li>▪ Awareness of bodily and sexual functions</li> <li>▪ Knowledge and use of birth control methods</li> <li>▪ Knowledge of sexually transmitted disease</li> </ul>                            | <p>Current Level of Functioning</p> |
| <p><b>Knowledge of general health concerns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Disease transmission (i.e., covers mouth when sneezing/coughing, controls drooling, blows nose, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Health concerns specific to disability (i.e., skin care, range of motion, positioning of weight)</li> <li>▪ Manages medication (i.e., knows medication schedule, ability to swallow, related behavioral concerns)</li> <li>▪ Cares for minor injury and/or illness</li> </ul> | <p>Current Level of Functioning</p> |
| <p><b>Awareness of home hazards and emergency procedures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uses adaptive strategies</li> <li>▪ Poisons</li> <li>▪ Fire</li> <li>▪ Accidents</li> </ul>  | <p>Current Level of Functioning</p> |
| <p><b>Priorities:</b></p>  |                                     |

## ◆ HOUSEHOLD MAINTENANCE

|   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| <b>Keeping room neat</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Makes bed</li> <li>▪ Changes bed linens</li> <li>▪ Straightens room</li> </ul>  | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Handling of household chores</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Does laundry</li> <li>▪ Vacuums / dusts</li> <li>▪ Cleans bathroom</li> <li>▪ Sweeps</li> </ul>                            | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Maintaining outdoors</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Rakes leaves</li> <li>▪ Mows lawn</li> <li>▪ Weeds</li> <li>▪ Waters lawn and plants</li> <li>▪ Cleans up after animals</li> </ul> | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Priorities:</b>  |                              |

## ◆ TRAVEL

|   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| <b>"Walking,, (Wheeling) to and from destination</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ safety when crossing streets</li> <li>▪ arrives at destination</li> </ul>   | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Riding Bicycle</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ knows safety rules</li> <li>▪ able to find way</li> <li>▪ locks bicycle</li> </ul>   | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Riding School/City Bus</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ demonstrates appropriate behavior when on the bus</li> <li>▪ communicates with bus driver</li> <li>▪ can find appropriate bus</li> <li>▪ can read bus map</li> <li>▪ can make a transfer</li> <li>▪ knows how to pay</li> <li>▪ shows buss pass</li> </ul> | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Driving Own Vehicle</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ knows laws</li> <li>▪ uses seat belts</li> <li>▪ knows what to do in an emergency</li> <li>▪ uses appropriate adaptive equipment</li> <li>▪ demonstrates safe &amp; defensive technique</li> </ul>  | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Orienting Skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ identifies signs</li> <li>▪ carries identification</li> <li>▪ asks for help</li> <li>▪ responsible for possessions</li> <li>▪ uses cautions with strangers</li> <li>▪ reads maps</li> </ul>  |                              |
| <b>Priorities:</b>  |                              |

## ◆ GENERAL SHOPPING

|   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| <b>Handling Money/Budgeting</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ makes shopping lists</li> <li>▪ knows budget constraints</li> <li>▪ handles money exchanges</li> </ul>   | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Locating/Getting Items</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ pushes cart</li> <li>▪ uses store directory</li> <li>▪ asks for help</li> <li>▪ follows list</li> <li>▪ makes appropriate choices</li> <li>▪ does cost comparisons</li> </ul>                      | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Clothes/Personal Items</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ selects appropriate store</li> <li>▪ asks for help</li> <li>▪ selects items within budget</li> <li>▪ knows sizes</li> <li>▪ makes wise choices</li> <li>▪ handles money exchange</li> </ul>        | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Restaurant</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ "reads" Menu (or alternative)</li> <li>▪ communicates to Waitperson</li> <li>▪ uses Manners</li> <li>▪ locates Restrooms</li> <li>▪ tallies bill (including tip)</li> <li>▪ handles money exchanges</li> </ul> | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Priorities:</b>  |                              |

## ◆ USING SERVICES

|   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| <b>Using Services</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ uses pay phone</li> <li>▪ uses Relay system (if hearing impaired)</li> <li>▪ uses Beauty parlor</li> <li>▪ makes Appointments</li> <li>▪ uses Banking Services</li> <li>▪ uses/Communicates with dentist, doctor, etc.</li> <li>▪ uses Laundry/drycleaner</li> </ul> | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Priorities:</b>  |                              |

## ◆ PLANNING/SCHEDULING

|   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| <b>Following daily routines</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ shows up on time</li> <li>▪ gets to where they are supposed to be</li> <li>▪ adapts to changes in routine</li> <li>▪ able to tell time</li> </ul>  | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Scheduling weekly activities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ uses a time management system (i.e., calender/daytimer)</li> <li>▪ maps out plans and time (i.e., organizes time)</li> </ul>   | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Preparing for special outings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ arranges special things to do</li> <li>▪ handles logistics involved in planning an event</li> </ul>   | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Handling Time Management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ plans homework time</li> <li>▪ arranges study area</li> <li>▪ attends to homework</li> <li>▪ plans time for chores, meetings, leisure time</li> <li>▪ arranges transportation</li> </ul> | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Priorities:</b>  |                              |

## ◆ SOCIAL SKILLS

|   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| <b>Telephone Use</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ phone etiquette</li> <li>▪ takes message</li> <li>▪ dials phone</li> <li>▪ can use phone for emergency</li> <li>▪ can use assistive devices if necessary</li> <li>▪ can use phone directory</li> </ul>  | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Caring for Others</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ pet care</li> <li>▪ sibling care</li> <li>▪ babysitting</li> <li>▪ elderly</li> </ul>   | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Reciprocal Relationships</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ gift giving</li> <li>▪ remembers birthdays</li> <li>▪ sends thank you cards</li> </ul>   | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Behavior Management Social Skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ introduces self</li> <li>▪ follows instructions</li> <li>▪ accepts criticism or consequence</li> <li>▪ accepts no for an answer</li> <li>▪ greets people</li> <li>▪ gets peoples attention appropriately</li> <li>▪ makes requests appropriately</li> <li>▪ disagrees appropriately</li> <li>▪ gives negative feedback appropriately</li> <li>▪ resists peer pressure</li> <li>▪ apologizes</li> <li>▪ engages in conversation</li> <li>▪ gives compliments</li> <li>▪ volunteers</li> <li>▪ reports peer behavior appropriately</li> </ul> | Current Level of Functioning |
| <b>Priorities:</b>  |                              |



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## BEFORE: PARENT/FAMILY TRANSITION ASSESSMENT FORM

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### Dear Parents:

As your son or daughter moves closer to graduation, it is important to begin to plan for his/her future. At the next staffing, we will develop a transition plan. The transition plan will identify future goals for your son/daughter and ways to support him/her in reaching these goals. We would like to see all our students become productive members of society.

Your input and involvement is critical. Please take a few minutes to complete this Transition Assessment. Think of your son/daughter as an adult after graduation and identify your dreams/goals for him/her.

### CAREER/EMPLOYMENT

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I think my son/daughter could work in:

- Full time regular job (competitive employment)
- Part time regular job (competitive employment)
- A job which has support and is supervised, full or part time (supported employment)
- Military Service
- Volunteer work
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

My son/daughter's strength in this area is:

My son/daughter seems to be interested in working as...

When I think of my son/daughter working, I am afraid that...

To work my son/daughter needs to develop skills in:

**EDUCATION:**

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Future education for my son/daughter will include:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> College or University | <input type="checkbox"/> On-the-job training          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community College     | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal development classes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational training   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                 |

My son/daughter's educational strengths are:

To attend post-secondary training my son/daughter will need to develop skills in...

**RESIDENTIAL/LIVING:**

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After graduation my son or daughter will live:

- On his/her own in a house or apartment
- With a roommate
- Supervised living situation (group home, supervised apartment)
- With family
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

My son/daughter's strength in this area is:

When I think about where my son/daughter will live I am afraid that...

To live as independently as possible my son or daughter needs to develop skills in;

**RECREATION AND LEISURE:**

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When my son/daughter graduates, I hope he/she is involved in:

- Independent recreational activities
- Activities with friends
- Organized recreational activities (clubs, team sports)
- Classes (to develop hobbies, and explore areas of interest)
- Supported and supervised recreational activities
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

During free time, my son or daughter enjoys:

My son/daughter's strength in this area is:

When I think of the free time my son or daughter will have after graduation I am afraid that:

To be active and enjoy leisure time my son or daughter needs to develop skills in:

**TRANSPORTATION:**

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When my son/daughter graduates, he/she will:

- Have a driver's license and car
- Walk or ride a bike
- Use public transportation independently (bus, taxi, train)
- Supported transportation (family, service groups, car pool, special program)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

My son/daughter's strength in this area is:

When I think of my son/daughter traveling around the community I worry about...

To access transportation my son/daughter needs to develop skills in...

**Review the following items. Please identify 3 to 5 areas only.  
My son or daughter needs information/support in the following areas:**

**SOCIAL/INTERPERSONAL:**

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- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Making friends                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Handling anger/ Frustration         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Setting goals                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Communicating needs/wants           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family relationship             | <input type="checkbox"/> Relationships with the opposite sex |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Handling legal responsibilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Relationships with Co-workers       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                    |  |

**PERSONAL MANAGEMENT:**

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- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hygiene         | <input type="checkbox"/> Money Management/budgeting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Safety          | <input type="checkbox"/> Tune/time management       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mobility        | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal Care              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____               |

**HEALTH**

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- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> AIDS awareness      | <input type="checkbox"/> General health care needs          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sexuality Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Information on drug/ alcohol abuse |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____        |   |

**SELF-DETERMINATION**

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- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding his/her disability | <input type="checkbox"/> Setting personal goals  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Advocating for himself/herself   | <input type="checkbox"/> Making informed choices |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                     |  |

## Tips for Parents . . .

### Helping Your Children Plan Their Careers

Because your children's career choices will affect not only them but you, you have a right and a responsibility to be active in helping them develop their career plans--starting at an early age. Career development is an ongoing process, starting at birth and continuing through adulthood.

You can help your children by using some of the following suggestions.

#### ✓ In the elementary years

- ❖ Point out examples of workers providing services and creating products in your community. Make an effort to show both men and women in a variety of occupations.
- ❖ Encourage children to approach jobs at home in a positive manner and to complete them in a certain amount of time.
- ❖ Listen for clues to determine whether your children consider certain kinds of work "masculine" or "feminine" and help them see beyond the stereotypes.
- ❖ Introduce children early to a wide range of sports and hobbies. Broadening children's interests provides more opportunities for them to succeed.
- ❖ Encourage children to ask the question, "What will I be when I grow up?" Allow them to consider all possible job choices, even if some seem questionable to you. Try to make decisions "with" your children, rather than "for" them.
- ❖ Help children select leisure reading material that shows different sexes, races, and ethnic backgrounds in a variety of work and social settings.
- ❖ Participate in the school's career education effort as a guest speaker, activity leader, or field trip sponsor.
- ❖ Express interest in children's school work ... to them it is real work. Help children understand the importance of school by showing how subjects like reading, writing, and arithmetic are used in most occupations and in daily living.

#### ✓ In the junior high years

- ❖ Discuss your career and volunteer activities with your children and their friends. Share information about how your work satisfies your personal, economic, and social needs. If possible, take children to work with you to observe all you've described firsthand.
- ❖ Discuss children's skills, abilities, interests, values, and goals with them as they select academic courses and extracurricular activities. Help them realize they can enroll in high school vocational programs and still go on to college if they wish.
- ❖ Encourage children to participate in service oriented activities in their community. Not only will they actively be exploring career possibilities, but they can discover the sense of pride and accomplishment that comes from work

- ❖ “Hands-on’ activities are especially important for junior high students. Try to arrange for them to observe, talk with, work alongside, and receive instruction from adults working in their areas of interest.
- ❖ Build financial understanding in children by explaining everyday tax, market, and banking concepts, and by involving them in economic choices and guided money management.
- ❖ Make it possible for children to participate in a variety of community activities so they begin to be seen as an integral member of the community.

✓ **In the high school years**

- ❖ Help young people see themselves as worthy individuals, capable of making increasingly independent decisions.
- ❖ Young people may need help seeing the links between present choices and future outcomes. You can assist them in developing guidelines for choosing among school courses, higher education options, and employment opportunities.
- ❖ Encourage them to consult teachers and counselors for additional help in identifying interests and abilities, and to seek guidance in applying this knowledge about themselves to the world of work.
- ❖ For young people who may not be competitively employed, explore ways to establish a routine for daily or weekly participation in the community.
- ❖ If possible, arrange for young people to visit vocational schools, technical schools, colleges and universities. All kinds of postsecondary educational opportunities should be explored.
- ❖ Besides helping arrange career "shadowing" and other exploration experiences for young people, offer to sponsor such activities at your own workplace.
- ❖ Encourage young adults to obtain and maintain job commitments, paid or unpaid, for at least a few months before leaving high school.
- ❖ Promote the understanding in young people that they will need not only job skills but also adaptable skills for occupational success.
- ❖ Give young adults certain economic obligations, such as saving for education, special trips, or items. Help them develop financial plans and time lines.

By using these suggestions and encouraging your children to participate in career development programs in the public schools, you can help them make career decisions that will result in happier, more productive lives.

## PREPARING YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER FOR ADULTHOOD

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, IDEA, requires that planning for transition services be included in the IEP process for students beginning at the age of 14. It is important that the high school experience for each student relates to his or her desired post-school outcomes and that connections are made to the appropriate community agencies before the student leaves the school system. The other part of preparing for transition begins much earlier and takes place in the home and the community. Parents can do many things to help their son or daughter develop good decision-making and self-advocacy skills that will allow them to be as independent as possible. These are a few suggestions that may get you thinking.

### **1. Give your child opportunities to practice decision-making skills.**

Children can begin learning decision-making skills when they are very young by giving them simple choices. Many young children can indicate if they want a drink of juice or water, plain milk or chocolate milk, choose to wear red socks or blue, which story they would like read to them. As children get older the opportunities for making choices, and the complexity, can increase. A child can select the topic for a school assignment, or can choose between a variety of chores at home. Eventually, a young adult will need to make choices about educational and employment options. We all learn from consequences as we make decisions. Having opportunities to choose and learning to make good choices builds self-confidence and promotes independence.

### **2. Teach your child about his or her disability.**

Having a clear definition and understanding how the disability affects a person helps young adults determine available options and advocate for themselves. Focusing on what the person can do, as well as how different techniques can achieve a desired result, teaches an individual how to ask for accommodations at school or on the job. Practice with successful self-advocacy leads to self-confidence.

### **3. Recognize and build on your child's personal strengths.**

Regardless of the disability, every person has areas of strength and unique characteristics. It is important for families to help children begin to recognize their positive qualities and build upon them. Thank your son for his helpfulness and praise your daughter for persevering at a task. Comment on your daughter's sense of humor or your son's patience with an elderly relative. Identify strengths that will be beneficial in the adult world such as working well in a group, being organized, following a routine, managing personal materials, or being a self-starter. Understanding personal strengths and characteristics will be very important when it is time to identify potential career and employment options.

### **4. Teach your child strategies to do things independently.**

Your son or daughter may need to learn alternative ways to accomplish tasks that are difficult because of their disability. For example, if your son has difficulty understanding money, teach him to round up to the nearest dollar rather than count out change for a purchase. Or, make picture cards for your daughter that show the necessary coins for a snack vending machine. Shopping can be a more successful experience with a list using pictures or labels. A picture chart in the bathroom with hygiene steps, sorting instructions by the washing machine, a list by the back door of things to take to school, or a cheat sheet for filling out checks, can ensure that your child can manage tasks more independently. As

children become young adults, it is particularly important that they learn strategies that will allow them to be as independent as possible in dressing and personal care, including learning to work with personal care attendants.

**5. Help your child cultivate community participation and support networks.**

The more your child is involved in the community, the wider his or her support network and the greater the opportunities for social interaction after high school. Register your child for art or swimming lessons through the recreation center. Take him or her to events at your synagogue, church or other spiritual center. Participate in youth activities such as Girl Scouts or 4H. Volunteer together. Allow people in the community to get to know and appreciate your child. As your child becomes a young adult, they are the ones who may offer future employment and social opportunities.

**6. Encourage your child to participate in developing his or her individualized education program (IEP), including transition goals.**

Children and young adults attending, and perhaps eventually facilitating, their IEP meeting learn how to advocate for themselves. They learn about their disabilities and needs, gain skills in negotiating and help to decide their own futures.

**7. Learn about laws that protect adults with disabilities and agencies that provide services.**

There are many state and federal laws affecting adults with disabilities related to post-secondary education and training, employment, medical care, and housing. Support services in the adult system are provided by a variety of different agencies and can be confusing to access. Understanding the law and adult agencies helps persons with disabilities exercise their rights and access the services that would be most appropriate for them.

**8. Prepare yourself to let go.**

Becoming the parent of a young adult, and pushing them from the family nest, is very difficult for most parents. It is especially hard for families whose child has disabilities requiring ongoing supports. As your child becomes a young adult, it may be helpful to begin to think of yourself as a coach rather than a caretaker. Gradually allow your son or daughter to do things independently, or rely on other providers for support, while you act as the coach to practice with them, cheer them on in their efforts, and be the safety net when necessary.

The level of independence that your son or daughter may reach will be based on individual strengths and needs, and some may take longer than others. It can be frightening to watch your child become a young adult but parents can do many things to prepare their son or daughter to be as successful and independent as possible. It is never too early to begin, or too late.



## TRANSITION CHECKLIST

The following is a checklist of transition activities that students, parents, and school personnel may wish to consider when preparing transition plans with the IEP team. The student's skills and interests will determine which items on the checklist are relevant. Use this checklist to determine whether or not these transition issues should be addressed at IEP transition meetings. The checklist can also help identify who should be part of the IEP transition team. Responsibility for carrying out the specific transition activities should be determined at the IEP transition meetings.

### **Four to Five Years before Leaving School**

- For students who will require community participation and residential supports as an adult, make application to the Community Center Board.
- Identify student learning styles and the necessary accommodations to be a successful learner and worker.
- Identify career interests and skills, complete interest and career inventories, and identify additional education or training requirements.
- Explore options for post-secondary education and training including admission criteria.
- Identify interests and options for future living arrangements, including supports.
- Learn to communicate effectively his or her interests, preferences and needs.
- Be able to explain his or her disabilities, areas of strength, and accommodations needed.
- Learn and practice personal health care and hygiene management including appropriate sexual behavior.
- Learn and practice informed decision-making skills.
- Investigate assistive technology tools that can increase community involvement and employment opportunities.
- Broaden student experiences with community activities and expand friendships.
- Pursue and use local transportation options outside of family.
- Acquire an identification card and the ability to communicate personal information.
- Identify and begin learning skills necessary for independent living including money management.



### **Two to Three Years Before Leaving School**

- Identify community support services and programs (Vocational Rehabilitation, Centers for Independent Living, Community Centered Board, etc.)
- Coordinate with adult service providers and ensure that appropriate referrals have been made.
- Match career interests and skills with academic course work and community work experiences.
- Gather more information on post-secondary programs and the support services offered; and make arrangements for accommodations to take college entrance exams.
- Identify health care providers and become informed about sexuality and family planning issues.
- Determine the need for financial support (Supplemental Security Income, state financial supplemental programs, Medicare).
- Learn and practice appropriate interpersonal, communication, and social skills for different settings (employment, school, recreation, with peers, etc.).
- Explore legal status about decision-making prior to the age of majority and consider the need for guardianship
- Begin a resume and update it as needed.
- Practice independent living skills, e.g., budgeting, shopping, cooking, and housekeeping.
- Identify needed personal assistant services, and if appropriate, learn to direct and manage these services.

### **One Year Before Leaving School**

- Apply for financial support programs. (Supplemental Security Income, Independent Living Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Personal Assistant Services).
- Identify the post-secondary school the student plans to attend and arrange for accommodations.
- Practice effective communication by developing interview skills, asking for assistance, and identifying accommodations that will be necessary in post-secondary and work environments.
- Specify desired job and obtain paid employment with supports as needed.
- Take responsibility for arriving on time to work, appointments, and social activities including transportation needs.
- Assume responsibility for health care needs (making appointments, filling and taking prescriptions etc.).
- Register to vote and for selective service (if a male).



*Checklist adapted from the National Transition Network Checklist.*

